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NEWS RELEASE

February 26, 2010

Tulsa, Oklahoma

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“Club Drug” Defendants Plead Guilty

U.S. Attorney Thomas Scott Woodward announced that two men have pleaded guilty in federal court for trafficking in what are commonly called “club drugs.”

Lewis Aaron Nixon, III, 27, of Oklahoma City, pleaded guilty today to Possession of Benzylpiperazine. He will be sentenced on June 8, 2010. Lorenzo Cottrell Marable, 24, of Oak Park, Michigan, pleaded guilty to the same offense on February 8, 2010, and will be sentenced on March 11, 2010. Another co-defendant is scheduled for a court appearance on March 9, 2010. They were indicted by the Grand Jury in January 2010.

The defendants came to the attention of law enforcement on December 15, 2009, when they were stopped for a traffic violation by an OHP trooper on I-44 near Vinita. They were traveling in a rental 2009 Dodge Avenger driven by an individual with a suspended license. Upon further investigation by the trooper it was learned that none of the four occupants of the vehicle had a valid drivers license. The trooper’s canine unit alerted during an open area sniff and led to a search of the vehicle. The search revealed approximately 6,000 pills that were tested and found to be Benzylpiperazine (BZP), a Scheduled I controlled substance, meaning it has high potential for abuse and no accepted medical use. Other more common names for the drug on the street is “Molly” or “Legal E” or “Legal X.” BZP is commonly used as a “club” or “designer” drug promoted to youth at raves (all-night dance parties). It has euphoric, stimulant properties similar to amphetamine. This is a case of first impression in this federal jurisdiction, the Northern District of Oklahoma, as this particular drug has not been seen by law enforcement previously.

The case was investigated by the Oklahoma Highway Patrol and the Drug Enforcement Administration. Assistant U.S. Attorney Robert T. Raley is representing the government in the case.